



Check out
the resources
we've created
for you!

*What's available from
Too Smart To Start:*

- **Too Smart To Start Web page**
(www.toosmarttostart.samhsa.gov). Provides information about communicating with and helping youth remain alcohol free, plus games and puzzles for youth and parents/caregivers.
- **Free materials**, including a community action kit, print public service announcements, posters, and a board game. Available through SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) by telephone (1-800-729-6686) or online (www.ncadi.samhsa.gov) or email (info@ncadi.samhsa.gov).
- **Free technical assistance** to help establish and implement your own Too Smart To Start initiative. Available in such areas as social marketing, action planning, message and materials development, cultural competency, materials review, and media relations.



Too Smart To Start is led by the
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, part of the
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration,
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
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**Call 1-800-729-6686 for
more information about the
Too Smart To Start initiative.**



Too Smart To Start



*An underage alcohol use prevention initiative
that provides strategies and materials for
professionals and volunteers working
at the community level*



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
www.samhsa.gov



Staying Smart About Underage Alcohol Use Prevention

Too Smart To Start is a public education initiative that provides research-based strategies and materials to professionals and volunteers at the community level to help them conduct an underage alcohol use prevention initiative. The goal of Too Smart To Start is to decrease the risk of underage alcohol use by increasing the knowledge and skills of 9- to 13-year-olds and of their parents and caregivers so they can positively address underage alcohol use issues. In order to help communities reach this goal, Too Smart To Start was created with three objectives:

1. Increase the number of conversations that parents/caregivers and their 9- to 13-year-olds have about the harms of underage alcohol use.
2. Increase the percentage of 9- to 13-year-olds and their parents/caregivers who see underage alcohol use as harmful.
3. Increase public disapproval of underage alcohol use.

Even though national research shows that most of these youth have *not* begun using alcohol, most expect to use alcohol in the future. Evidence of this expectation can be found in national data that show the average age of first use is declining and that nearly 10.5 million 12- to 20-year-olds are current users. Yet professionals, volunteers, and parents and caregivers have an opportunity to help youth shape their health behaviors *right now* because 9 to 13 is the age range in which youth establish health behavior patterns that can have lifelong significance. Parents are particularly important to shaping health behaviors. For example, their disapproval of underage alcohol use has been identified as the key reason children choose *not* to use alcohol.

The hallmark of the Too Smart To Start program is its flexibility in the way it can be implemented in the local community. Too Smart To Start is not intended to be prescriptive. Rather, it offers information on the alcohol use behaviors of 9- to 13-year-olds, a consistent message, and basic materials and strategies to deliver the core behavioral messages. The expectation is that locale-specific data will be added to Too



Smart To Start information, messages, and materials, and that elements will be tailored or adapted to the locality. The nine Too Smart To Start communities provide good examples of various ways that Too Smart To Start can be tailored or adapted.

The nine piloting organizations are New Castle County Community Partnership, Inc., DE; Informed Families/The Florida Family Partnership, FL; Drug-Free Noble County, Inc., IN; Newaygo County Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Coalition, MI; Coalition for a Drug-Free Greater Cincinnati, OH; The Oregon Partnership, Inc., OR; Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation/TVS Coalition Network, Inc., PA; Bethlehem Centers of Nashville and Nashville Prevention Partnership, TN; and San Antonio Fighting Back, Inc., TX.

Everyone Can Participate!

The success of Too Smart To Start depends on active community involvement. Volunteering to distribute materials, chaperoning alcohol-free activities, or serving as spokespersons for school or community events are just a few of the many ways parents, caregivers, and other committed adults can support 9- to 13-year-olds in their decisions to remain alcohol-free.

Anyone who works with or cares for youth ages 9 to 13—whether a parent/caregiver, an older sibling, a teacher or coach, a member of the faith community, a service provider, a media professional—can participate. Take a few minutes to learn more about Too Smart To Start and consider joining this exciting and positive initiative. To find out how to become part of the Too Smart To Start initiative, call 1-800-729-6686 today!



Too Smart To Start is supported by a broad network of prevention partners who have demonstrated a long-term commitment to keeping America's youth alcohol-free. This network will further the overall awareness, reach, and utilization of this initiative and its materials, messages, and products. Particularly, partners will reach out to their affiliates through national meetings, events, publications, and other venues. The national partners include:

- American Medical Association (AMA)
- Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)
- National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc.
- National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors/National Prevention Network (NASADAD/NPN)
- National Family Partnership (NFP)
- PRIDE Youth Programs.



Too Smart To Start offers to Professionals and Volunteers:

- **A Community Action Kit** designed to help plan, develop, promote, and support local underage alcohol use prevention initiatives, particularly for 9- to 13-year-olds. Included in the kit are such materials as "SmartSTATS: A Data Book," PSAs, posters, and booklets to help enrich and enhance the quality and scientific value of underage alcohol use prevention efforts.

Using these materials in an existing underage alcohol use prevention program can benefit your community by increasing overall awareness of the harm that underage alcohol use causes, increasing the number of 9- to 13-year-olds and their parents and caregivers who view underage alcohol use as harmful, and increasing public disapproval of underage alcohol use.